

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

By Xabrina-Michel'li Thompson

Living is an act of authorship; we are all writing a story with our lives and the lives which are molded by these stories are part of it.

Orphaned, abandoned, and vulnerable children are near and dear to God's heart. Their biological birth, like mine, was neither planned nor wanted by their parents, but God has planned their spiritual birth. Out of the overflow of God's miraculous participation in our lives, we should encourage others to become involved in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children because God's heart is filled with love and compassion for them. My priority is to help orphans and vulnerable children experience the love and joy of belonging to a family. This is what I found when God heard my cry.

As an adopted child I have an affinity with orphaned, abandoned, and vulnerable children and know, firsthand, what a difference a loving, caring helping hand can make to their lives. It is this affinity which lead me to initiate the involvement of the Gabriel Love Foundation to assist with financing the establishment and ongoing running costs of an infant children's home at the Benjamin Generation Child Care Centre, which is in the heart of one of the poorest rural areas in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, where the need is virtually a bottomless pit.

Indicative of the size of this bottomless pit, according to the National Adoption Coalition of South Africa (NACSA) it is estimated that approximately nine babies are abandoned in South Africa every day. That is more than 3000 a year, while many more remain in squalled conditions of neglect and abuse. According to a NACSA study on child abandonment, restrictive legislation, poverty, mass urbanization, high levels of violence including rape, severe gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and alcoholism, as well as the breakup of the traditional extended family support system, are some of the causes of the exceedingly high levels of child abandonment, neglect, and abuse in South Africa.

The Baby Home at the Benjamin Generation Child Care Centre is a fully registered place of safety and was created to care for more than ten abandoned, orphaned, and neglected babies each month. Since its inception in November 2020 the project has achieved its goal and transformed many children's lives. This is due entirely to the professional management and running of the Benjamin Generation Child Care Centre.

All of this has been made possible and lives are being changed because of the generosity, benevolence, and agape love of the Gabriel Love Foundation. Their continuing financial assistance and genuine concern and compassion towards the welfare of these infants is a beautiful, practical reminder of the very essence of the Christmas spirit of goodwill, generosity, and love.

Besides Gabriel Love Foundations involvement another vital element of the success of the baby home is of course, the dedicated caregivers who, in essence, are surrogate mothers to these precious little souls. These ladies are divinely gifted with the most loving hearts and stories abound of their self-less commitment to these children; of how they bond with them, stay up all night with them when they are not well or are troubled, comforting and nurturing them. Loving surrogate mothers indeed.

As much as these ladies are undoubtedly changing the lives of the little ones in their care, in return the baby home has changed their lives. From being one of the unemployed masses (current official unemployment rate in South Africa is at a record of 34.4%, or 7.8 million jobless people, according to Stats SA) they now have rewarding employment with prospects of personal growth. Their dignity has been restored and their lives have been given meaning and purpose. Many of them have become their family's primary bread winners. For the first time in their lives, they can contribute to their own children's wellbeing as well as to that of their extended families including their grandmothers, or Gogo's, the respectful isiZulu term for the family matriarch.

The Gabriel Love Foundation's transformative gift has impacted not only the Benjamin Generation Child Care Centre but the entire New Hanover Community.

We may not be able to do great things such as the Gabriel Love Foundation has done, but we can all do modest acts of kindness with tremendous love. As Reverend Desmond Tutu, Nobel Laureate, so succinctly puts it, “If each of us in our own small way does whatever we can, whenever we can, wherever we can, with whatever we can the world will be a better place for all”.

Too many people too often say that they will do it when they have enough money, when they have completed their studies or when their career is on track. Well, I decided long ago that I wasn’t prepared to wait until my life was “perfect” before doing something to help orphans and vulnerable children. Matthew 25:35-40 is a compelling piece of scripture, particularly verse 40; The King will reply “I tell you, whenever you did this for the least important of these members of my family, you did it for me” (GNBUK).

We have the capacity to influence the lives of others and ourselves when we devote our time and resources to something bigger than ourselves. The more we support causes that are important to us, the better our communities will become. The Gabriel Love Foundation’s legacy of generosity and community upliftment is truly inspiring. They continually foster a deep commitment to make communities a better place.

Words change lives. These little ones are incapable of articulating the horrors of their stories. It is for this reason and because the pen is certainly mightier than the sword, that I bring you, at this Christmas time, a story of commitment, love, and of hope to a brighter future. A shining light in a sea of unemployment and poverty.

A blessed Christmas to you all and may your 2022 be healthy, peaceful, and prosperous.





Disclaimer: The children's faces have been blurred out for child protection and privacy purposes.